

**Town of Haverhill, NH  
FIRE DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE**

**External Stakeholders Public Meeting #3**

**MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, July 21, 2020, at 7:00 PM**

(All members participated by videoconference because of the COVID-19 pandemic)

**DRAFT / subject to review by the Committee**

**Live on Facebook and Zoom.**

**Fire Department Committee Members:**

Jon Bouffard, St. Johnsbury Fire Chief, Resident of Pike (Chair of Committee)  
Brigitte Codling, Haverhill Town Manager  
Darwin Clogston, Select Board Chair  
Keith Charpentier, Deputy Chief, Haverhill Corner Fire Dept.  
Jeff Robbins, Woodsville Fire Chief  
Phil Blanchard, N. Haverhill Fire Chief  
Michael Lavoie, Haverhill Corner Precinct Commission Chair  
Paul Kidder, Woodsville Precinct Commission Chair  
Dennis Fournier, No. Haverhill Precinct Commission Chair  
Bob Long, Mountain Lakes Precinct Commission Chair  
Jennifer Boucher, Haverhill Finance Officer

**Members PRESENT:**

Brigitte Codling (Lead for the Meeting)  
Phil Blanchard  
Darwin Clogston  
Keith Charpentier  
Dennis Fournier  
Michael Lavoie  
Jennifer Bouchard  
Jeff Robbins

**Members of the Public Present:** Roderick Ladd, Anthony Smith, Bernie Marvin, Sean Bigelow

**Brigitte Codling opened the meeting at 7:15 pm to give members of the public to log in.**

**Brigitte Codling presented an INTRODUCTION**

Codling stated that this is number three of the External Stakeholders' meetings, and it's to gather public input into the process of development of the Town's Fire Department and to give the Committee an opportunity to provide to the public an overview of what the Committee is doing. Codling introduced the Mission and Purpose statements for the Fire Department Committee.

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**Mission Statement:** The Mission of the Fire Department Committee is to develop a pathway towards building the best fire department the Town of Haverhill could field in all the districts and gain the professional input of all our current fire chiefs, volunteer firefighters, Town officials, and the general public to ensure we are acting in the best interest of the Town, as well as the current fire departments.

**Purpose Statement:** It is the purpose of the Town of Haverhill Fire Department Committee to examine facts and elicit input from the public, for the purpose of developing a Town Fire Department, including all the structural elements needed to deliver a superiorly efficient, truly effective, and fiscally responsible fire service for the residents of and visitors to the Town of Haverhill. The Committee's work is to affect positive and progressive change in the delivery of public safety services including: Fire, Rescue, Hazardous Materials, Technical Rescue, EMS, Public Health, and Emergency Management within the Town of Haverhill.

TM Codling invited the public to comment.

TM Codling gave an overview of the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis, which the Committee is using for analysis of goals and direction. TM Codling invited the public to visit the Town's website to view the Committee's minutes and statements, which she stated were developed for the Fire Department Committee, not for the Fire Department itself.

TM Codling invited the public or others on the Committee to comment. TM Codling provided a list of questions to begin the discussion:

- What do you want the Fire Dept Committee to focus on?
- What do you expect from your local fire service?
- What would you like to see presented at a future meeting?
- What is important to you as residents of Haverhill?

Ladd stated that from a new Fire Department, we should receive a service that is either equal to or exceeds the service we are provided now, including efficiencies in costs so that taxes do not go up. And, at our Haverhill Corner meeting and did the annual budget, the vote was 45 to 6 not to relinquish. The precinct was being asked to relinquish all control without having anything in hand—no contract. So, I think it was a premature warrant article to vote on. Ladd noted that Haverhill Corner is unique because of its emergency service. TM Codling replied that trip data will show call numbers of all fire stations. Carpentier stated that he can gather trip date per month or per year. Blanchard noted that other stations have EMTs or paramedics, and that the Committee is focused on having a plan for the use of personnel throughout the precincts.

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Smith stated that he understood that Haverhill will have a fire department and the North Haverhill Fire Department will no longer exist. TM Codling replied that the Committee has been charged with developing a fire department for the Town of Haverhill and that we're collecting data now to develop a plan and organization structure. Ladd stated that his concern is unintended consequences and things might come out worse. TM Codling noted that the Committee has members from all precincts and the intent is to include as many people as possible.

Smith brought up the concern of retaining staff and recruitment. Ladd noted that they have on-call volunteers now and budgets may increase with high wages. TM Codling and other discussed the importance of community spirit and unity, which the Fire Department Committee wants to keep alive.

Robbins stated that some people don't know what they have for Town fire assets and capabilities. Ladd noted that we don't know what the future will look like. TM Codling emphasized the importance of data collection and analysis.

TM Codling brought up the concern about ISO ratings and insurance rates to the public. Blanchard stated that the Committee needs to focus on providing the best fire service while being fiscally responsible. Ladd stated that the fire service costs need to be looked at as a component of the Town's budget, not separately.

TM Codling stated that a cost-benefit analysis will be done by the Committee with a side-by-side comparison as suggested.

**MOTION #1:** Phil Blanchard made the motion to adjourn and Mike Lavoie seconded the motion. All in favor.

Meeting ADJOURNED at 8:43 PM.

**NEXT Meetings for Internal Stakeholders:** Tuesday, July 28 at 11:00 AM and Tuesday, July 28 at 7:00 PM.

*Transcribed by Joanna Bligh*